DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG EMPLOYEES

PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to (1) set forth UCLA Hospital System’s need to create and maintain an environment free from intimidating, disruptive, threatening, bullying and violent behavior and (2) to facilitate the effective management of conflict between leaders when the conflict has the potential to threaten the health, safety and quality of care.

The degree to which leaders work together and manage conflict enhances or detracts from the organization’s performance. Conflict commonly occurs and many times can be a productive means for change. However, there are instances where conflict is not managed effectively and can pose a negative threat to the functionality of a system.

POLICY
Intimidating and disruptive behaviors can foster medical errors, contribute to poor patient satisfaction, adverse outcomes, increased costs of care, employee turnover and result in overall poor quality of care. Safety and quality of patient care is dependent on teamwork, communication, and a collaborative work environment. Overt and passive disruptive behaviors can undermine team effectiveness and can compromise the safety of patients. All intimidating and disruptive behaviors are unprofessional and unacceptable. To assure quality and to promote a culture of safety, UCLA Hospital System has zero tolerance for disruptive behaviors that affects patient care.

Typically, individuals are expected to resolve and/or manage conflict directly in a professional manner or using the chain of command. This policy applies to exceptional circumstances in which routine channels of communication have failed to manage conflict effectively, and the conflict has to potential to negatively impact staff and introduce risk to the safety and quality of care provided to patients.

SCOPE
This Health System Policy applies to the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, the Santa Monica UCLA Medical Center & Orthopaedic Hospital, the Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital (RNPH) at UCLA and the Licensed Clinic employees.

PROCEDURE
The UCLA Hospital System will respond appropriately to every reported incidence of disruptive, threatening or violent behavior.

DEFINITIONS
Examples of inappropriate behavior by employees include, but are not limited to:
I. Behavior that distracts, interferes with, or prevents normal work functions or activities. These behaviors may have a direct effect on morale or staff turnover and may include but are not limited to verbal outbursts or yelling, using profanity or vulgarity, verbally abusing others, bullying and intimidation, making inappropriate demands for time and attention; making unreasonable demands for action (demanding an immediate appointment or a response to a complaint on the spot) or refusing a reasonable request for identification; using condescending language or voice intonation; and displaying impatience with questions.

II. Passive activities such as refusing to perform assigned tasks or quietly exhibiting uncooperative attitudes during routine activities, and reluctance or refusal to answer questions, return phone calls or pages repeatedly.

III. Behavior that includes physical threats or actions short of actual contact/injury (e.g., moving closer aggressively), oral or written threats to a person or property, whether in person, over the telephone, by email or through other means of communication such as social media.

IV. Behavior that includes physical assault, with or without weapons, behavior that a reasonable person would interpret as being violent (e.g., throwing things, pounding on a desk or door, or destroying property), and specific threats to inflict physical harm.

V. Behavior that creates incidents that are stressful or traumatic that interfere with an individual's or group of individuals' ability to effectively function in his/her work environment.

VI. Stalking or the willful, malicious and repeated following or harassing of another employee, patient or visitor whether on or off UCLA Hospital System premises.

REPORTING
Complaints under this policy shall be reported up through the chain of command (supervisor, manager, director, associate director, CEO) and the Human Resources department or the hospital Security Department. If the employee is reporting a complaint about someone in the employee’s chain of command, the employee may go directly to the human resources department. All reports or complaints under this policy will be investigated and will be handled confidentially. Once an investigation is complete, a recommendation on how to rectify or resolve the complaint will be submitted to the appropriate area for disposition. Some behaviors may also be prohibited under criminal law, and where appropriate, the Hospital System will report such cases to the UCLA Police Department.
Reporting Conflict Between Leaders
Where conflicts arise between leaders, all attempts should be made to manage the conflict successfully between the parties and their superiors. If the conflict cannot be resolved, a formal request must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the Chief of Staff. Once a formal request is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and Director of Human Resources for the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center or the Medical Director and Director of Human Resources for the Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital. All relevant information will be gathered surrounding the nature of the conflict by the CMO, Medical Director, Director of Human Resources or designee depending on the facility. These individuals will be responsible for the management of the conflict and to ensure there is no effect on patient safety. Scenarios are managed on a case by case basis. Cases that cannot be resolved by the normal chain of command will be adjudicated by the governing body to ensure avoidance of any impact on patient safety.

RETAILATION
UCLA Hospital System seeks to encourage staff to report any problem, concern, or complaint about disruptive and intimidating behavior. Retaliation against someone who reports or provides information about disruptive and intimidating behavior is strictly prohibited. Any act of reprisal violates UCLA policy and will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY
I. Educate all team members - both physicians and non-physician staff - on appropriate professional behavior as defined by this policy. Hold all team members accountable for modeling desirable behaviors, and enforce this policy consistently and equitably among all staff regardless of seniority or clinical discipline in a positive fashion through reinforcement as well as corrective action.

II. If a patient and/or family member is involved in or witnesses intimidating or disruptive behavior, supervisors should listen and empathize with their concerns, thank them for sharing their concerns, and apologize for the behavior that they witnessed.

III. Document all attempts to address intimidating and disruptive behaviors.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE
I. Counseling for employees may be available through the Staff and Faculty Counseling Center for anyone involved in disruptive incidents and anybody affected by violence.

II. Threat Management Teams: teams composed of mental health professionals and members of the UCLA community trained in working with issues related to violence and the appropriate handling of on-going emergencies are available to assist individuals or departments, as appropriate. Team members may include
representatives from Security, Staff and Faculty Counseling Center, Legal, and Human Resources.

PROTECTIVE ORDERS
Members of the UCLA Hospital System who have obtained a protective order should notify their Human Resources representative for their area who will supply a copy of the order to the Security Department. Other parties may also be informed when deemed necessary for the safety of the employee and the Hospital System community.

CORRECTIVE ACTION
Employees who violate this policy may be subject to corrective action up to and including dismissal.

FORMS
None

REFERENCES
The Joint Commission LD.02.04.01
UCLA Health System Social Media Policy #HS 7322

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